CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT CCD/321
11 March 1971

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 10 MARCH 1971 TO THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FROM THE DELEGATIONS OF MEXICO, SWEDEN AND YUGOSLAVIA

On the occasion of the 500th meeting of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, we would be grateful if you would issue as a document of the Conference the attached Declaration on Peace and Disarmament by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates which was presented to the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General on 21 September 1970.

Alfonso García Robles

Mexico

Alva Myrdal

Sweden

Milorad Bozinovic

Yugoslavia

GE.71-6041
71-08121

DECLARATION ON PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

By the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates

The year 1970 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the beginning of the Disarmament Decade proclaimed by the General Assembly. It should be a time of celebration and of hope for peace and disarmament. It is instead a time of disquiet and fear.

It is only too easy to understand why a decline of general interest, sometimes a sense of cynicism, and even a feeling of despair, have begun to cloud the efforts of nations to bring meaning to disarmament. The world remains divided. Violence spreads. The Middle East and South-East Asia are ravaged by war. New conflicts threaten. Distrust, tension and violence, not peace and disarmament, seem the realities of today.

The total world expenditure for military purposes had already reached the figure of 120,000 million dollars in 1962, the year when the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee began its work. By 1969 it had risen to 200,000 million dollars. The "mad momentum" of the nuclear arms race still continues.

But whatever the immediate discouragement and frustration, it none the less remains as true today as it has always been that in the final analysis, reduction of armaments has to be a condition of world peace, and that the arms race is linked, whether as cause or effect does not matter, with unrest and suspicion between nations. The world has lulled itself into a state of mind which accepts armaments and the diversion of resources which they imply. It has lulled itself into a belief that it can live with nuclear weapons, that these and other armaments bring security. All they bring in fact is the threat of disaster. The world could never survive a nuclear holocaust. There is no hope without the kind of mutual understanding which measures of disarmament, however small, will help to bring about.

The 1960s witnessed the achievement of a number of treaties which show that progress towards disarmament can be made. The Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, the Treaty establishing a Nuclear-free Zone in Latin America of 1967, the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, are all witness to this fact. Each step which is taken provides a pointer to others which have still to be taken.

Unfortunately, despite these successes, there is increasing diversion of enormous resources and energy, both human and physical, from peaceful economic and social pursuits to unproductive and uneconomic military purposes.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has warned: "The world now stands at a most critical crossroads. It can pursue the arms race at a terrible price to the security and progress of the peoples of the world, or it can move ahead towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, a goal that was set in 1959 by a unanimous decision of the General Assembly on the eve of the decade of the 1960s. If it should choose the latter road, the security, the economic well-being and the progress not only of the developing countries, but also of the developed countries and of the entire world, would be tremendously enhanced."

If civilization is not to suffer a set-back from which it might never recover, if man is to survive on our globe, it is imperative that the Disarmament Decade be made to live up to its name.

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the USA and the USSR which are now taking place are a sign that the two "super-Powers" realize that the nuclear arms race gives them no security and that it must be curbed. All pray for their success; the consequences of failure can be fatal. They must halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. A mutual moratorium on the development and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapons systems, such as the MIRVs and ABMs, is the most important first step.

Warfare may in the past have been associated with victory; and occasionally with peace. It is clear that it can no longer result in either. Let the Decade of Disarmament therefore bring with it an increasing realization that whatever its costs, whatever presumed advantages have to be ceded, the political settlement of international differences will in the end always prove less costly and less dangerous than any attempted settlement brought about by the force of arms. With this realization, may the nations of the world during the Disarmament Decade

finally embark on the reduction and elimination of the dreaded means of their destruction. Nothing less will rescue mankind from international anarchy and war.

(Signed)

Lord BOYD ORR
Lester B. PEARSON
René CASSIN
Philip NOEL-BAKER
Linus PAULING

Note: Ralph J. Bunche, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations, the only other living Laureate, feels that as a member of the Secretariat, he cannot be a signatory to the Declaration, but he fully agrees with the text and has endorsed it.